

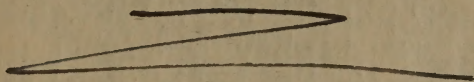
MR. CAMPBELL'S PUPILS.

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Mr. Campbell's Pupils





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Mr. Campbell's Pupils.

ONE morning a certain number of people had come straggling into the empty music-room at the Crystal Palace, deserted as yet and only lined with a silent audience of straw-chairs; an hour or two later every corner would be filled, every place be packed with a mass of listening people following the quivering bow of the leader, and absorbed in eager attention. As yet only the chairs were set out in the area below, while up above the musicians were installed. The members of the chorus were in orderly array, the violins in their eddying lines and rows, the drums prepared to boom at their appointed seasons, and tinkling things in their places, and flutes ready to strike up, and wind instruments to join their breath to the wavings, and streamings, and stirrings of the great concerto about to *be*, incarnated for the time in the performers and the listening men and women.

Joachim had been absent in his own country and now, after long silence, he had come back to his faithful English auditors. It had been announced that he was to lead the orchestra on this occasion and one or two old friends and acquaintances had come from town to be present at the rehearsal, and to bid him welcome. The old friend, who sits quietly waiting in the front row with folded hands, and soft grey hair and peaceful spiritual looks, is a musician herself—a true artistic soul, ever ready to answer to the call of those who surround her gentle life, and to be herself carried away from its anxious cares by the strains she knows so well how to love. People who are listening often seem to me as touching as the music itself; one may watch their faces, transfigured as the echoing radiance reaches them in turn. Music, like sunshine, belongs to all; neither age, nor illness, nor sorrows, hinder all its present blessing. It is not only for the happy; it is for the old, for the lonely, the forlorn, the disgraced in fortune and men's eyes. To all of these the faithful strains may speak of comfort, sympathy, forgiveness, with a strange personal impersonality.

Behind Miss H— three young women with sweet intent faces were following the score. And then just behind them a mother and her son were sitting together; and I remember no one else except the friend who had brought me. We were still expecting our musician when a side door opened, and a little file of people came in, quietly making their way from chair to chair, and settling down in a group. There may have been about twenty young men and women. One of the attendants, passing at that

moment told me that these were students from the Normal College for the Blind, close by, who are allowed the privilege of coming weekly to these rehearsals at the Crystal Palace. Then somebody else says "Hushsh." We hear a stir, a clapping welcome in the orchestra—there stands the leader in his place. It is strangely homelike to meet the glance of those thoughtful eyes, to recognise the brown Straduarius once more; the violin of the wonderful sobs and tender laughter that has so often swept us all into its charmed circle. For a few minutes all the orchestra is in a ferment and turmoil of greeting, and the conductor is acknowledging its good will, and then suddenly, at the tap of the bow upon the music stand, they all settle down to work, for no time is to be lost.

This particular concerto of Mendelssohn's begins with one single note, flashing, exquisite, breaking the silence of months for us; as it sung and thrilled on that day it seemed to awaken something in us all; it was like the first ray of light after the darkness of the night darting from behind the horizon in the early dawn, to be followed by all the lovely flames of sunrise. I wondered how the note struck the blind scholars, listening absorbed. Did it seem indeed a flashing of light in their darkened world?

I have paid more than one visit to the pupils at the College, since the morning when we listened together to that wonderful performance at the Crystal Palace. The master and mistress, Mr. Campbell and his wife, have always received us with great kindness, and have certainly made us feel more and more in sympathy with their object, their pupils, and their teaching. It is a teaching which some people may think not confined to the blind alone, for it suggests something beyond object lessons and music itself. "If people are no use, and are no longer trying to help one another," said some one in the College, "I think they had better come to an end at once. They are not wanted any more, neither here nor anywhere else." But the spirit of good-will predominates in the place, and every one there seems to be wanted.

An eager courage; hopeful trusting in others, a sympathy undaunted by difficulty: these are the qualities by which men are upheld in their work and enterprise, by which other people, more dull perhaps to see possibilities of good, less trustful by instinct, are nevertheless swept along almost unconsciously until they find themselves one day fellow-workers in some cause which has become their own. The first time I was at the College the foundation of the new house had scarcely risen above the slope of the lawn upon which it stands; the last time I went there good stout walls were upreared, the beams of the roof were being covered in, and a comfortable solid mansion, nearly completed, seemed to promise the permanent establishment of an important institution conducted upon the American system among us. Mr. Campbell told me that from all the people to whom he had applied, at one time or another for advice or assistance, he had scarcely ever met with a refusal, and only once with an instance of positive unkindness; and this was

from a person who came forward afterwards, unasked, and most materially and generously benefited the College. Mr. Campbell first called upon us with a letter from a friend, about a year ago, and in reply to our questions told us very simply how it happened that he, a stranger in our land, alone, without means or influence (except indeed that inestimable influence of personal character), should have determined to found an institution conducted according to the methods so successfully carried out in his own country. He had been for thirteen years or more musical director, and for some time resident superintendent of the Boston School for the Blind, and had come over, with his wife, to Europe for a holiday, to recruit his health after very long-continued hard work. Their return passage was taken, and it was only two days before the ship was to start that he happened to attend a certain meeting of blind poor in London, and that his attention was from circumstances forcibly drawn to the sufferings of some among them. Mr. Campbell spent some hours there, and talked to one person and another. He walked home, utterly crushed and dispirited, he told me; for the first time recognising the lives to which some of these uneducated, untrained, and suffering human beings were necessarily condemned. "In America," said the American, "things were differently arranged." By the time he got back to his wife, he had made up his mind. He said to her, "I think there is work for us to do over here. We will not go back; we will wait and see if we cannot do something for some of the English blind;" and so, with music in his gift, and relief from bonds of unspeakable weight, in a helping spirit of generous interest, this American, with the assistance of some true friends, has spent the last few years following out his plans, administering the funds which have been placed at his disposal, encouraging, educating, and inspiring his followers. By the advice and with the material assistance of a committee, he has founded this college, to which pupils now come from all parts of England, and from all gradations of society. Some of them (and, strangely enough, these are among the very brightest and best-looking of the little pupils) are from the workhouse, some have struggling, some have sensible well-to-do parents, who feel their children's advantage in dwelling in this community, where music is so admirably understood, and where a higher degree of cultivation is attained by the scholars than many a child with sight to help it on can hope for.

It is pleasant to read the hearty commendations of those sent to report upon the working of the College:

I am confirmed in my impression that in this College, if nowhere else, the difficulties which are generally supposed to attend all attempts to cultivate the minds of blind persons are entirely overcome, and that this may fairly be recommended as a model for all institutions in this country which have for their object not merely to teach the Blind to read the Bible and to make mats and baskets, but to generally educate them as well as to specially instruct them in the one subject in which the might be expected to equal if not surpass sighted persons—that of music.

(Signed)

J. RICE BYRNE,

H.M. Inspector of Schools.

And again :

The vocal practice I found to be systematic, and carefully attended to. The piano playing was excellent, and the players, even to the youngest, were able to describe, as if the book were open before them, the whole notation of the music played. It is impossible to overrate the importance of this method, because by it alone the blind become teachers of those who see.

The models of the various component parts of a pianoforte, in the department set aside for the training of tuners, pleased me very much, and I am not surprised to hear that some of the students of the College are already earning their living as thoroughly competent tuners.

(Signed) JOHN STAINER, M.A., Mus. Doc.

"It is a mere question of expense," says Mr. Campbell, who is blind himself, and who speaks from experience, "of patience in the teachers, of liberality in those who provide the means. A blind man's Bible costs, perhaps, fifty times as much as a common edition; his maps, his writing materials, every article in the school, is complicated and expensive in proportion." How cheap it is to have eyes! How much it costs to be blind! About 5,000*l.* more is wanted to complete the College, to furnish, to pay for the current expenses, to stock the shelves and the minds of the young scholars. It would be nice to send them the money all in sovereigns; the children would soon count it out into heaps, calculate the interest, the compound interest, how much for each person taught, how much immediate returns.

Some pupils only enter for a few weeks, learn the technical appliances, and go off; others come and remain for some time. One young man, after a year or two's tuition, was lately engaged by a great piano firm, in Manchester, and is already receiving 25*s.* a week as a tuner. Another, strange to say, is making a living out of the musical capabilities of the Bideford fishermen. He is organist in the church there, he has classes and lectures, and is supporting himself comfortably in that sunny cleft.

The appliances are singularly ingenious, and every day new adaptations are devised, by which form supplies a meaning to absent colour, and strange dots and ridges speak to the wise and sensitive fingers. The blind themselves are the most successful engineers in this apparently impracticable country. Here are maps that take to pieces and which the children know by heart; they can spread out Europe, Asia, America, without a moment's hesitation—a small fair-headed creature of nine years old starts off for a tour of the world and runs her little finger from shore to shore and from ridge to ridge, flying along in some magical mirage of her own and calling out nations, countries, oceans, and cities as she goes. One thing strikes one specially as one watches the working of the school, which is that all that the blind accomplish is thoroughly impressed upon their minds; cram, flare, sham knowledge can scarcely exist for them. The children having explained their maps produce their slates and do their sums with great quickness and clearness. One little

boy is given the two sides of a room and told to calculate the diameter; half-a-dozen more on a bench multiply, divide, add so much, shout out a square root as fast as the mistress can give the problem. Once they find her out and say that she is wrong and the mistress laughs and says that her pupils are right. Their slates are frames and soft boards, with paper upon which they prick the dots that represent either notes or numerals: when they reverse the paper they can follow the dotted lines and read what they have written down. A sum is a formidable thing under these circumstances, but they seem able to work out most things in their minds; they write a few memoranda and come to a solution far more quickly than by the old agonizing process of scratching pencil and slate and tear-smudged figures which many of us remember. It is the whole difference between doing work mechanically by the eye and with a mind intent upon the work. Mr. Campbell spoke with great feeling of the desire he felt for a real education for all the blind people; an education not of brushes and door-mats, which can scarcely be deemed sufficient interest for a life, an education not of leading-strings, but one of enterprise and real vital interest. Music is the most important element in his work, but music alone would not be enough; even more than others, must blind people learn to see, and learn with courage and patience all that comes naturally to those who are more fortunately circumstanced.

The object lessons are very curious; every variety of question is asked and answered, animals named in a way that Adam himself most assuredly could not have accomplished; races, divisions, subdivisions enumerated. "Those are those that *musticate* their food," cries one little naturalist from one side of the room. The little girls from their benches at the other end all put up their little hands at every question and can answer anything. They describe every variety of animal, vegetable: "Lions look bold and king-like," they say. "They are 'markably strong," cries a little boy in an awe-stricken voice. The children are asked what are the vegetable products of Iceland. "Nothing at all," says a sweet little pipe. Then suddenly the little girl who is called Jessie brightens up,— "Oh, yes, there is a sort of fine moss which is used for cooking," she cries.

I asked the teacher what books they chiefly used, and she told me *Wood's Natural History* and some simple scientific books of Dr. Hooker's. These are read out to the children and explained to them *viva voce*. I suppose it was as a treat on this occasion that the stuffed model of a cat with a mouse in its mouth was brought out and gravely handed down the class from child to child. Nothing was said; each in turn felt it carefully over, stroked the skin and the tail and passed it on in silence.

A music lesson I once heard given interested me most of all, the children's faces brightened up so delightfully, the master's skill was so spontaneous and suggestive. He played a few simple chords and modulations, then came a little fairylike creature who repeated them diffidently by ear, then more certainly, having seized the idea; her kind master made her show her skill in different ways. She played by ear, she played by memory with

greatest accuracy, then another girl sung to us with an exquisite soprano voice, thrilling and thrilling the sweetest cadences, then came a mezzo-soprano, very true and tender in expression. A dictation followed in the numerals which represented the notes and the children pricked and dotted assiduously on the frames upon their knees. When this was over Mr. Campbell bade them read what they had written down, and they turned their pages, ran their fingers over the marks at the back. "Well," said he smiling, "what is it?" A pause; he plays one note upon the piano; a sort of sudden flash along the little line, "The BLUE BELLS of Scotland," cries a little eager girl, and all the others begin to laugh and exclaim, and the master's face brightens too in sympathy with their eagerness.

In another room the young men were receiving instructions two at a time from a pianist who seemed thoroughly to understand his business.

"He is a teacher after my own heart," says Mr. Campbell, when he comes to call us away. The whole working of the house strikes one at once as homely and efficient. I have seen them at all times at their tea, at their evening service, or again filing off to lectures or suitable entertainments. All is quietly and quickly organised, although there do not seem to be half-a-dozen persons in the house who can see. One day they were at prayers, some one read a chapter from the Bible, the young folks sang a hymn; it was a very simple, very tranquil act of worship at the end of the day. There was a sense of peace in it all, and a blessing, I am sure, upon the cheerful and contented labourers.

Mr. Campbell dwelt very much upon the success he had had in America in teaching his pupils to tune pianos, and here too in England the effort seems likely to succeed. Dr. Armitage, in a valuable little book upon the education of the blind, says that the average earnings of the blind at their various trades scarcely exceeds five or six shillings a week; but there are some occupations in which the blind possess a positive advantage over the seeing, from their greater power of concentration. Piano-tuning is one of them. He gives an interesting account of the origin of this profession as a profession for the blind:

"About the year 1830, Claude Montal and a blind fellow-pupil attempted to tune a piano on which they practised. It, as well as the other pianos in the institution, was kept in very indifferent tune by a seeing tuner. This man complained to the directors, who administered a sharp reprimand to the two blind pupils, forbidding them ever again to touch the works. Nothing daunted, however, the two friends procured an old piano, and obtained permission to keep it in the institution. They practised themselves in taking it to pieces and remounting it; nor did they rest content until they had thoroughly repaired it and brought it into good tune.

"The next step was to begin regular instruction in tuning, and then commence the tuning classes which have made the Paris School famous throughout the civilised world. Montal soon left the institution and

endeavoured a private tuning connection, but the same prejudice which now exists in London against blind tuners was then in full force in Paris. No one liked to trust a piano to the blind man, and for some time he was glad to be allowed to tune gratuitously. During all this time he was steadily working at the theory of tuning. He eagerly studied everything that had been published upon the subject, and his own talent and thorough knowledge of the theory of music soon led him to adopt a better and more scientific system of tuning than that generally in use. A circumstance now occurred which was the turning point of his fortune. One of the professors of the Conservatoire having heard of the skill of the blind tuner, sent for him and showed him two pianos which he had in his apartment. They were of different construction, and from different makers. It was important that they should be in exact accord, and none of the numerous tuners who had attempted the task had been able to succeed. Montal said he would make an attempt. He first carefully examined the differences in the construction, and making allowance for them, set to work in a scientific manner, and the result of his tuning was a perfect success. He was now patronised by the other members of the Conservatoire, and soon was employed by some of the leading professional musicians of Paris, by whose recommendation alone his fame as a tuner rapidly increased. In 1832 he gave a course of lectures. He began on a small scale to repair and to make pianos. This was the commencement of the well-known manufactory of which he was long the head."

This is only one out of the many stories one reads of what perseverance and genius can accomplish. Genius is the very power of abstraction, say some philosophers. There is an interesting book by Mr. Johns, the chaplain of the Blind School of St. George's-in-the-Fields, which gives the usual short biographies of Hubner, Saunderson, John Metcalfe, and others, with extraordinary instances of perception, but these are, after all, exceptional. The book also contains an interesting account of the education and mental characteristics of the blind, but the result seems, as far as a mere reader with but little experience can form an opinion, to leave an impression of aroused instinct and cultivated memory, rather than of that completer education of the reasoning powers at which the American systems aim.

It is not only among the blind that a different theory of education is daily gaining ground; the same influences seem to be reaching different necessities, and to be working, let us hope, for much ultimate good.

There is a book by a blind biographer, called Wilson, in which he describes his own experience when he was sent, some seventy years ago, to an asylum in Belfast, where he was taught upholstery work, and given a little education. "Although my pecuniary circumstances were not much improved," he says, "I now experienced a greater share of happiness than I had ever enjoyed before. One of the children generally read to me while I was at work. I improved my mind while labouring for my support; time glided pleasantly away, no room being left for idle speculations or

gloomy forebodings." These few words seem to tell the whole story. But although the systems have certainly improved since those days, perhaps even a little less enterprise might have been found desirable.

Dr. Armitage says, "The usual plan hitherto has been for some one who is in comparative ignorance of what has been done by others, to start a new system, which is taken up by philanthropists. Subscriptions are raised, and the Babel of systems is increased by one more. In this way it has come to pass that the Bible has already been printed in English in five different systems, while there is scarcely any other standard work published. Another evil is that the blind have to learn to read the character in favour at the institution where they happen to have received their education, and if they are to obtain the benefit of the few books which have been embossed, they must learn two or three fresh systems, and perhaps discard altogether the one which has taken them years to acquire."

He answers very pertinently the objections which have been made to the use of a special character for the blind, which would perhaps at first seem to be a mistake, as tending to make a still greater separation between those who have and those who have not sight. This is a question, he says, which must be settled, not for, but by the blind for themselves; a council of blind gentlemen has been formed for determining this and other important questions. They have decided, on the whole, in favour of a special type. "Where the difficulty lies between a character, in which the blind man requires and can receive assistance, and one which is so simple that he can read it by himself, there ought to be no doubt as to the choice."

Lucas, Frere, Moon, and Braille seem to be the types usually employed.

"It is much to be regretted," says my authority, "that the same arbitrary signs used by Lucas, Frere, and Moon stand for different letters, —, for instance, represents *s* in Lucas, *n* in Frere, and *t* in Moon; \ means severally *f*, *d*, and *r*, in the three systems; **3**, *p*, *m*, *d*; **U**, *n*, *l*, *u*; **0**, *m*, *p*, *w*; and so on, to the utter distraction of the unfortunate students." M. Louis Braille, a pupil of the Institut des Jeunes Aveugles, invented a system which is now being received into more universal favour; it has the great advantage of being easily written by the blind themselves; it answers for musical notation, as well as for the letters of the alphabet.

I have before me a page of miscellaneous dots from Braille's different alphabets:—

	Do.	Re.	Mi.	Fa.	Sol.	La.	Si.
							
 or 							
 or 							

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
•	•		••	•	••	••	•	•	•
	•	••	•	•	•	••	••	•	••
K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
•	•	••	••	•	••	••	•	•	•
•	•	•	•	•	•	••	••	•	••
•	•	•	•	•	•	••	•	•	•

A very few moments' attention will suggest a meaning. These signs represent something that no signs or annotations could give if those who mark and those who read had not some mutual understanding by which one human being can express and put on record some of those realities that charm the bitterness of life away. The music through which we pass on our way is as surely as real an expression to some as the influence of nature to others. Whatever may come, whatever silence may fall hereafter, these things will have been. Mozart, with wistful sympathies, will have called to us, melting, irresistible; Mendelssohn's human voice will have reached our hearts; Spohr's hymns of hope and wonder will have soared heavenwards; Beethoven's waves of sound will have flowed in their mystic tides, sweeping how many shores and distant arid sands, bearing life to what lonely places.

The College at Norwood stands high upon a hill, with a whole world of green, of villas, and shrubberies, and cultivated fields, and other signs of life dazzling round about. The windows of the large pupil-room in the College look due west, and when we were last there the sky was all saffron in the sunset, bare trees cut black upon the blaze; the valley was over-flooded with the light, the hill-side and big room and the faces all shone sadly, brightly strange in the winter light. A man sat at the piano, striking the notes with a sympathetic hand, and listening attentively to the voices ranged on either side; as the sunset faded, the music did not cease. It was Mendelssohn again—one of his four-part songs—admirably given, in exquisite tune. Some one lit the gas for the use of those who were listening to the music, not for those who made it, and who sang so admirably, with such clearness and precision, that, as my companion said, it would be impertinent to praise what was so good. And so the voices sang on to us, striking notes as true and sweet and unfaltering as those of the wondrous violin itself.

The Hand of Ethelberta.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

KNOLLSEA—AN ORNAMENTAL VILLA.



ER energies collected and fermented anew by the results of the vigil, Ethelberta left town for Knollsea, where she joined Picotee the same evening. Picotee produced a letter, which had been addressed to her sister at their London residence, but was not received by her there, Mrs. Chickerel having forwarded it to Knollsea the day before Ethelberta arrived in town.

The crinkled writing, in character like the coast-line of Tierra del Fuego, was becoming familiar by this time. While reading the note she informed Picotee, between a quick breath and a rustle of frills, that it

was from Lord Mountclere, who wrote on the subject of calling to see her, suggesting a day in the following week. "Now, Picotee," she continued, "we shall have to receive him, and make the most of him, for I have altered my plans since I was last in Knollsea."

"Altered them again? What are you going to be now—not a poor person after all?"

"Indeed not. And so I turn and turn. Can you imagine what Lord Mountclere is coming for? But don't say what you think. Before I reply to this letter we must go into new lodgings, to give them as our address. The first thing to-morrow morning we must look for the gayest house we can find, and Captain Flower and this little cabin of his must be things we have never known."

The next day after breakfast they accordingly sallied forth. Knollsea had recently begun to attract notice in the world. It had this year undergone visitations from a score of professional gentlemen and their wives, a minor canon, three marine painters, seven young ladies with books in their hands, and nine-and-thirty babies. Hence a few lodging-houses, of a dash and pretentiousness far beyond the mark of the

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